

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECOSOC, WFP

SUBJECT: ECOSOC POSITINPAPER ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMIT-
TEE ON FOOD AID (CFA) (ITEM 17, UNEC D-337/78, SDIE/3104)

1. PROBLEM

A) A FINAL COPY OF THE CFA REPORT "GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA
FOR FOOD AID" HAS NOT BEEN AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW. FOLLOWING
COMMENTS ARE BASED ON THE DRAFT CFA REPORT DATED APRIL 1978
AND ON ITEMS RELATING TO THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP)
COVERED IN THE REPORT OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL (WFC) DATED
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JUNE 16, 1978. UNFORTUNATELY, THE DRAFT CFA REPORT CON-
TAINS BRACKETED LANGUAGE WHICH MAY STIMULATE DEBATE IN
ECOSOC. IN ADDITION, OTHER CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, WHICH HAD
BEEN RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS, MAY BE RE-OPENED BY LDCS IF
THEY BELIEVE ECOSOC WILL PROVIDE A MORE RECEPTIVE AUDIENCE.
THE GENERAL LANGUAGE ON CFA IN PARA 28 OF THE WFC REPORT
IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE US.

B) THE U.S. IS INTERESTED IN SEEING THAT WFP REMAINS AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT IN ASSURING THAT FOOD AID IS USED TO MEET AGREED-UPON GOALS. THE U.S. HAS A CLEAR INTEREST IN ENSURING THAT ANY INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR FOOD AID BE REASONABLE AND OBTAINABLE.

2. U.S. POSITION

A) THE U.S. BELIEVES THAT THE FORMULATION OF A STATEMENT OF GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR FOOD AID CAN BE HELPFUL, ESPECIALLY AS IT REFLECTS THE CONSENSUS OF BOTH DONOR AND RECIPIENT NATIONS. SUCH A STATEMENT MUST NOT, OF COURSE, BE UNDULY RESTRICTIVE, FOR IT MUST MAINTAIN THE FLEXIBILITY REQUIRED TO DEAL DEQUATELY WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF FOOD AID SITUATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.

B) THE INTERIM REPORT SUBMITTED TO ECOSOC BY CFA/5 CONTAINS SOME BRACKETED LANGUAGE, ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THAT AGREEMENT WAS VERY NEAR IN ROME IN CFA DISCUSSIONS. THEREFORE WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE COUNCIL TO CONFINE ITSELF, AS DID THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL IN ITS RECENTLY CONCLUDED MEXICO MEETING, TO THE EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOOD AID POLICIES AND PROGRAMS FOR THE PROGRESS THAT IS REFLECTED IN THE INTERIM REPORT AND TO URGE IT TO CONCLUDE SPEEDILY ITS WORK AT ITS SIXTH SESSION. THE CFA SPENT CONSIDERABLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TIME ACHIEVING THE CONSENSUS THAT IT DID ON A NUMBER OF PRIORITIES AND IT WOULD BE BOTH UNPRODUCTIVE AND A SHOW OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE CFA TO REOPEN ISSUES UPON WHICH CONSENSUS HAS BEEN OBTAINED. ON THOSE FEW ISSUES REMAINING IN BRACKETS, THE U.S. DELEGATION CONTINUES TO RESPECT THE COMPETENCE OF THE CFA, AND BELIEVES IT CAN CLOSE THE GAP ON ALL REMAINING POINTS IN DISPUTE.

3. FALLBACK.

A) THE DELEGATION SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PREVENT A DISCUSSION OF THE BRACKETED LANGUAGE. SHOULD THE ECOSOC, NEVERTHELESS, DECIDE TO DISCUSS THE BRACKETED ITEMS, (IN PARENTHESES BELOW) THE DELEGATION SHOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

B) (GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR FOOD AID): SEE PARA 2A ABOVE

C. (RECOMMENDS): THE U.S. BELIEVES THAT "RECOMMENDS" IS THE APPROPRIATE WORD AND IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE CONSENSUS OBTAINED ON THE TEXT.

D. (AND FOOD SECURITY): THE USE OF FOOD AID FOR FOOD SECURITY IS APPROPRIATE, BUT NOT AS A PRIORITY GOAL. THIS IS GENERALLY CONSISTENT WITH PARAGRAPH 11 OF THE WFC MANILA COMMUNIQUE RECOMMENDATION TO THE CFA TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES TO "ASSIST IN DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING FOOD RESERVES."

E. (1). PARA (B) - (IN PHYSICAL TERMS, PREFERABLY FOR NOT LESS THAN THREE YEARS): THE U.S. FAVORS THE ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FORWARD PLANNING BY BOTH DONOR AND RECIPIENT COUNTRIES. WE NOTE THE AGREED UPON LANGUAGE OF ARTICLE III (2) OF THE DRAFT OF THE NEW FOOD AID CONVENTION (FAC) - "TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS "HALL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE MADE BY MEMBERS AND NEEDS ESTIMATED BY RECIPIENT COUNTRIES ON A FORWARD PLANNING BASIS, SO THAT RECIPIENT COUNTRIES MAY BE ABLE TO TAKE ACCOUNT, IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES, OF THE LIKELY FLOW OF FOOD AID THEY WILL RECEIVE DURING EACH YEAR OF THE CONVENTION." THIS, WE BELIEVE IS FULLY CONSISTENT WITH PARA 9 OF THE MANILA COMMUNIQUE WHICH CALLS FOR DONOR COUNTRIES TO "... MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THE FORWARD PLANNING OF FOOD AID SUPPLIES."

(2) WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT SPECIFYING A CERTAIN NUMBER OF YEARS AS A TARGET IS UNDULY RESTRICTIVE. IN PROJECT FOOD AID, THE LENGTH OF THE PROJECTS WILL VARY, AND IT IS NOT HELPFUL FOR GENERAL GUIDELINES TO STATE A MINIMUM REQUIREMENT. IN NON-PROJECT FOOD AID, BECAUSE THE UNDERLYING CONDITIONS ARE OFTEN OF A SHORT TERM AND/OR HIGHLY VARIABLE NATURE, A MINIMUM REQUIREMENT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC.

(3) SIMILARLY, THE ASSURANCE OF PLANNING IN PHYSICAL TERMS IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE FOR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS, BUT TO SUGGEST A QUANTITY GUARANTEE FOR A DONOR COUNTRY'S FOOD AID PROGRAM (WHICH INCLUDES BOTH PROJECT AND NON-PROJECT FOOD AID), IS ALSO UNREALISTIC, GIVEN THE POSSIBILITY OF SIGNIFICANT PRICE MOVEMENTS AND THE NEED TO IMPLEMENT COMMODITY MIX CHANGES. INCREASED DONOR COUNTRY PLEDGES UNDER THE FAC, MADE ON A TONNAGE BASIS, OFFER ASSURANCE ON OVERALL QUANTITY TERMS. THIS APPROACH WE BELIEVE IS COMPLETELY CONSISTENT WITH THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE IN RESOLUTION XVIII THAT DONOR COUNTRIES "... MAKE ALL EFFORTS TO PROVIDE COMMODITIES AND/OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THAT WILL ENSURE IN PHYSICAL TERMS AT LEAST 10 MILLION TONS OF GRAINS AS FOOD AID A YEAR."

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(4) THE UNITED STATES THEREFORE PREFERS THAT THIS BRACKETED LANGUAGE BE REPLACED WITH THE WORDS "ON A MULTI-YEAR BASIS, WHERE APPROPRIATE." (NOTE: USDEL MAY ULTIMATELY ACCEPT THE EXISTING LANGUAGE AS A LAST FALLBACK, PROVIDED THE "WHERE APPROPRIATE" IS INSERTED AFTER "FORWARD PLANNING" AND WE NOTE FOR THE RECORD THAT WE BELIEVE THAT FORWARD PLANNING APPLIES PRINCIPALLY TO PROJECT FOOD AID.)

F. PARA (C) - (PREFERABLY FOR NOT LESS THAN THREE YEARS):
SEE ABOVE. THE NEED TO PRESERVE ADAPTIVE FLEXIBILITY SUG-

GESTS THE REPLACEMENT OF "GENERALLY" FOR "PREFERABLY."
(NOTE: USDEL MAY ULTIMATELY ACCEPT THE LANGUAGE AS IT STANDS.)

G. PARA (J) - (WHEREVER APPROPRIATE): THE U.S. SUPPORTS THE RETENTION OF THE WORDS "WHEREVER APPROPRIATE" IN RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT NOT ALL COUNTRIES WILL REQUIRE FOOD RESERVES.

4. DISCUSSION.

A. AT THE CFA/5 MEETING IN ROME A CONSENSUS WAS ALMOST OBTAINED ON THE GUIDELINES TEXT, AND NEEDED ONLY A FEW HOURS MORE OF WORK. HOWEVER, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DRAFTING GROUP CHOSE TO KEEP BRACKETED LANGUAGE AND TO RECOMMEND THAT IT BE SO FORWARDED TO THE WFC. WHATEVER HIS MOTIVES, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME RECIPIENTS MAY WISH TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE TEXT IN GENEVA.

B. WE SHOULD RESIST THAT BECAUSE THE TEXT NOW REFLECTS MANY HOURS OF EFFORT AND COMPROMISE, AND DETAILED DISCUSSION IN ANOTHER FORUM COULD CAUSE ISSUES TO BE REOPENED BY DELEGATES NOT FULLY AWARE OF THE BALANCE STRUCK IN ROME. THERE THE LDC CALLS FOR "STEPS FORWARD" AND "PROGRESS" FROM THE BASE OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE AND THE MANILA COMMUN-

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NIQUE WERE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THOSE DOCUMENTS THEMSELVES REFLECTED AN INTERNAL BALANCE OF ISSUES AND TO EXTRACT SINGLE ITEMS WAS NOT COMPLETELY APPROPRIATE. CHRISTOPHER

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